

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2842

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FOR AF/EX

E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OGEN, AFSP

SUBJ: SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

REF : STATE 267821

1. THE EMBASSY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING SUMMER PROGRAM FOR AN AMERICAN GRADUATE STUDENT INTERN TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION. DESIGNED TO REINFORCE AMERICAN TRADE AND COMMERCE EFFORTS, THE PROGRAM IS DIVIDED INTO TWO AREAS IN WHICH THE INTERN CAN WORK SIMULTANEOUSLY.

2. ONE SEGMENT OF THE PROGRAM WOULD BE TO START PUTTING TOGETHER A MORE EFFECTIVE AGENT-DISTRIBUTOR STRUCTURE FOR U.S. PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND POTENTIAL INVESTMENTS IN NIGERIA. IT IS ESSENTIAL HERE TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE, A NIGERIAN, ON THE GROUND AT ALL TIMES. HE MUST BE INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH THE LOCAL SCENE, KNOW HIS AMERICAN PRODUCT (OR SERVICE OR COMPANY) IN DEPTH AND DETAIL, AND FORCEFULLY AND IMAGINATIVELY PROMOTE THAT PRODUCT OR CLIENT. IN RECENT YEARS MOST REPRESENTATIVES WERE "PERSONALITIES" WHO STRESSED PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND "CONNECTIONS" RATHER THAN THE MERITS OF THE PRODUCT. THIS APPROACH HAS COME INTO DISREPUTE WITH A NEW ADMINISTRATION THAT VIEWS "INFLUENCE PEDDLARS" AS HAVING TAINTED THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND SABUSED THE ECONOMY.

3. WE NEED A RESOURCE BASE OR NETWORK OF LOCAL NIGERIAN

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REPRESENTATIVES WHO POSSESS THE QUALITIES NEEDED TO PROPERLY

REPRESENT AMERICAN BUSINESS. A PROMISING BUT
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SOURCE ARE NIGERIAN ALUMNI FROM AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES.
AMONG OTHER THINGS, WE WOULD WANT OUR INTERN TO DEVELOP A
SYSTEM WHEREBY ABLE GRADUATES, OFTEN EQUIPPED WITH A TECHNICAL
BACKGROUND, CAN BE APPRISED OF OPPORTUNITIES AND MATCHED
WITH AMERICAN FIRMS WHO SEEK SUCH REPRESENTATIVES. INVOLVED
IN THIS PROJECT WILL BE OTHER RELATED FUNCTIONS SUCH AS
CATALOGING AND CROSS-INDEXING INDIVIDUAL AGENTS, CATEGORIES
OF AGENTS AND CURRENT REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN COMPANIES.

4. THE SECOND PROGRAM SEGMENT WOULD BE TO PREPARE A HANDBOOK
ON THE RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE TENDERING PROCESS IN
NIGERIA. AWARENESS OF HOW TO FIND AND RESPOND TO CALLS FOR
BIDS MEANS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN
OBTAINING MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. TOO
FREQUENTLY IN THE CASE OF AMERICAN COMPANIES INADEQUATE
KNOWLEDGE AND PREPARATION HAS MEANT FAILURE FOR THAT COMPANY'S
INTEREST IN THE AFRICAN MARKET. THE EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY
EXAMINED AND REPORTED ON THE METHODS USED BY THE FEDERAL
MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN SEEKING BIDS AND AWARDING CONTRACTS,
BUT THIS IS ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE. MANY CONTRACTS FOR GOODS
AND SERVICES REMAIN WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE 12 STATES. BY
SUMMER THE STATES MAY NUMBER 20 OR MORE. EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT
THE STATES GO ABOUT TENDERING IN DIFFERENT WAYS. EACH HAS
ITS SEPARATE STRUCTURE OF BOARDS, AUTHORITATIVE INDIVIDUALS
AND PROCEDURES. OUR INTERN WOULD CALL ON THE DIFFERENT
STATE CAPITALS AND INTERVIEW KEY MINISTRIES. HE OR SHE
WOULD THEN PREPARE A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY SHOWING HOW TENDERS
ARE ISSUED IN EACH STATE AND THE STEPS AN AMERICAN FIRM SHOULD
TAKE IN IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES AND BIDDING ON THEM.

5. THE INTERN WOULD BE UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION OF THE EMBASSY
ECONOMIC COUNSELOR, A MATURE AND EXPERIENCED OFFICER WHO CAN
BE COUNTED UPON TO PROVIDE CAREFUL AND IMAGINATIVE GUIDANCE.
THE AMBASSADOR WILL TAKE A DIRECT AND PERSONAL INTEREST IN
THE INTERN, WHO CAN BE ASSURED A BUSY AND REWARDING SUMMER
AS A MEMBER OF AN ENERGETIC AND HIGHLY MOTIVATED EMBASSY
TEAM. HOUSING IS AVAILABLE BUT PREFERABLE THAT INTERN BE
SINGLE.

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6. EMBASSY LOOKS FORWARD TO DEPARTMENT'S NOMINATION OF
CANDIDATE WHOSE DOSSIERS WE COULD REVIEW WITH EYE TO
IDENTIFYING INTERN BEST QUALIFIED FOR LAGOS POSITION.
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